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BLACKHORN

A NEW PLAYABLE RACE FOR YOUR FANTASY TABLETOP ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

INCLUDES RULES FOR 5E AND PATHFINDER

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BLACKHORN

The phrase ‘never lock horns with a blackhorn’ refers not only to this race of humanoid beetle’s strength, but also their stubbornness and brutish behaviour. Their daunting carapaces can be up to six-inches thick in places, and cover their entire bodies like natural plate armour. An immense horn bursts out of their forehead which they use not only as a sign of prowess, but also to smash their opponents and toss them into the air.

Bulky and Brutish

Their broad shoulders and thick armour make blackhorns daunting and so other races generally fear them. They are much taller and stockier than humans, standing at around 6 to 7 feet tall (or 7 to 8 feet tall when you include their prominent horn). Their heavy frame, thick muscle and dense natural armour means that they can weigh anywhere from 300 to 350 pounds. Male and female blackhorns both have the same stature and height, but female carapaces are often darker in their colouration.

The colour of a blackhorn’s shell is inherited from their parents – a child’s shell will take the colour of either their mother or father. Dark carapaces are some of the most common (hence the name ‘blackhorn’), but blackhorns can appear in any colour. Their shells can take on metallic, pearlescent, matte or sometimes even glossy qualities.

Born into Conflict

To live as a blackhorn is to know combat. When a blackhorn reaches adulthood at 12 years of age, they must partake in a brutal rite of passage known as an Ordeal, of which only seven in ten survive. Blackhorns have been known to live to around 60 years of age in some cases, but due to the perilous situations they often find themselves in, it is uncommon for one to die of natural causes.

Strength is power in blackhorn society, so its people are constantly looking for new ways to prove themselves and create trophies from the mightiest of beasts. They are driven and determined; their promises and pacts last indefinitely, and are rarely broken. Because of this, each has a strong sense of honour.

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A Network of Hives

Cavernous blackhorn hives stretch deep underground, often in hot scrubland or where there are rich sources of food. The hives are always growing and changing, but their deepest parts are reserved for important political and governmental hubs such as the palace and brood of the current matriarch or patriarch. Each hive is considered a tribe or clan, and fierce rivalries can form between different hives. If one hive's leader defeats that of another in combat, the hive of the defeated leader is destroyed and its inhabitants are given a humbling choice: join the hive of the victor or leave for good and take their chances in the outside world.

'Yeah, I saw one of them blackhorns once. He was sat on a rock, calm and peaceful as you like, meditating or something. In my spying, I had drawn the attention of a bear who wanted me for his lunch. With strength and brutality, that beetle fella rose up and showed the bear who's boss'.

– Overheard in a tavern outside of Brackenbury

Naming Conventions

Blackhorns are considered young until they have completed their Ordeal, normally around their twelfth birthday – this can include defeating a dangerous creature near to their hive or completing a test of extraordinary strength. Until they complete their Ordeal, they are only referred to by their mother's heritage name. Not giving children an individual name prevents parents forming too strong an attachment until their child has survived this dangerous coming-of-age rite of passage.

When they enter adulthood, a blackhorn selects a name (from their native tongue, Elitra) that relates to their Ordeal in some way to make sure that they never forget the strength they showed on that day. They then combine this name with their heritage name to create their own unique moniker. For example, Groe'ban combines the name taken after their Ordeal 'Groe' (meaning Lion) and their family heritage name 'Ban' (meaning Purple). Heritage names can refer to particular features, colourations, shell qualities or horn size. There are no distinctions between male and female names.

Ordeal Names: Groe, Klik, Drec, Hukk, Loe, Zuq, Friek, Dax, Lom, Dred, Prea, Crun, Sma, Fyll, Prump, Cran, Dekk, Prip, Gant, Muke, Lav, Slukk, Uru, Osz, Terr, Ree, Qua, Zuu.

Heritage Names: Ban, Pul, Frimm, Galt, Puru, Enke, Feld, Gest, Dezz, Fili, Ruyy, Lopah, Dellz, Huar, Ekig, Mal, Festo, Jisz, Kikkiq, Jusp, Fentz, Uni, Esmu, Tell, Uim, Prih, Majeh.

5E TRAITS AND RULES

Your blackhorn character is hardy and strong, and is already equipped with hefty natural armour in the form of a thick carapace.

Ability Score Increase
Your Strength score increases by 2 and your Constitution score increases by 1.

Age
Blackhorn eggs take around two years to hatch. Once they have been born, blackhorns reach physical and mental maturity around age 11 and take part in their Ordeal at age 12, after which they are considered an adult. A blackhorn can live up to 60 years of age naturally, but many die younger due to their brutish lifestyle and almost constant proximity to danger.

Alignment
Strength is law in blackhorn society, but their behaviour can differ from hive to hive. Their pacts and promises last a lifetime, and because of this some are sworn to lawfulness. Others, due to constant upheaval and change in leadership, tend towards chaos.

They value courage and fortitude in all of its forms, so have more of a neutral leaning than specific draws towards good or evil. The greatest influence on their alignment is their upbringing under a certain hive leader.

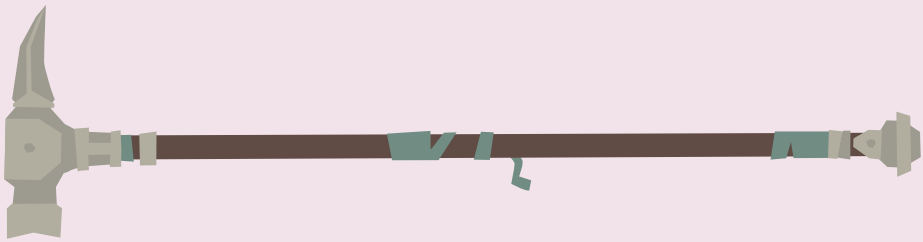
Size
Blackhorns range from 6 to 7 feet tall (or 7 to 8 feet tall when taking their horns into account) and have stocky, heavy builds. Your size is Medium.

Speed
Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

Darkvision
Living in large underground hives means your eyes are accustomed to both light and dark conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern colour in darkness, only shades of grey.

Menacing
You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill.

Gore
You can use your horn in combat and drive it towards your foe as an unarmed strike. If you hit with it, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.



Traditionally, blackhorns tend to favour hefty, blunt weapons like warhammers, mauls and clubs.

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Charge
Once per turn, if you move at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hit it with a Gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a Strength saving throw (with a DC the same as your Strength score) or be knocked prone.

Hard Shell
Your hard carapace is up to six-inches thick in places and can withstand punishment that would easily kill other races. You gain a permanent +1 bonus to your AC.

Languages
You can speak, read and write Common and Elitra. Elitra is a language made up from clicks, chirps and whistles that a blackhorn can make within their multifaceted vocal cords. The script uses a character-based system, with each character representing a word or syllable, rather than alphabet-based scripts more widely used by other races.

PATHFINDER ANCESTRY

If you want to play a character who is heavily armoured, perseverant and tenacious, you should play a blackhorn.

Hit Points: 10

Size: Medium

Speed: 25 feet

Ability Boosts: Strength
Constitution
Free

Ability Flaw: Charisma

Languages: Common, Elitra. Additional languages equal to your Intelligence modifier (if it's positive). Choose from Goblin, Jotun, Orcish, Terran, Undercommon, Sylvan and any other languages to which you have access (such as the languages prevalent in your region).

Traits: Blackhorn, Humanoid.

Darkvision: You can see in darkness and dim light just as well as you can see in bright light.

Blackhorn Heritages

RED-SHELLED BLACKHORN
Situated in a desert, your hive operates in scorching temperatures. This grants you fire resistance equal to half your level (minimum 1), and you treat environmental heat effects as if they were one step less extreme.

PURPLE-SHELLED BLACKHORN
You take pride in your shell, it is especially thick and durable and any scratches or cracks heal themselves within days. When you regain Hit Points overnight, add your level to the Hit Points regained. When anyone uses the Medicine skill to Treat your Wounds, you can add your level to the Hit Points you regain from their treatment.

GREEN-SHELLED BLACKHORN
Growing up in a swampy and acrid hive allows you to easily cope with toxins. You gain poison resistance equal to half your level (minimum 1), and each of your successful saving throws

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against a poison affliction reduces its stage by 2, or by 1 for a virulent poison. Each critical success against an ongoing poison reduces its stage by 3, or by 2 for a virulent poison.

Ancestry Feats

1ST LEVEL

CHILD OF COMBAT
Frequency: Once per day
Trigger: You would be reduced to 0 Hit Points but not immediately killed.
Your Ordeal still feels fresh in your mind, you were born for this. You avoid being knocked out and remain at 1 Hit Point, and your wounded condition increases by 1.

YEARS OF TRAINING
You begin training at a much earlier age than other races, making you much more versatile. You gain a 1st-level general feat. You must meet the feat's prerequisites, but if you select this feat during character creation, you can select the feat later in the process in order to determine which prerequisites you meet.

BLACKHORN WEAPON FAMILIARITY
In combat, you favour the blunt weapons that are traditionally used within blackhorn hives. You are trained with the mace, club, maul and warhammer.

HEFTY LOAD
Your bulk and naturally strong frame allow you to comfortably wear armour that other races may find too heavy or burdensome. Ignore the reduction to your Speed from any armour you wear.

In addition, any time you take a penalty to your Speed from some other reason (such as from the encumbered condition or from a spell), deduct 5 feet from the penalty. For example, the encumbered condition normally gives a −10-foot penalty to Speed, but it gives you only a −5-foot penalty. If your Speed is taking multiple penalties, pick only one penalty to apply your reduction to.

HEART OF STONE
Over your life you have seen many able blackhorn warriors and fighters live and die, giving you a calloused and hardened heart. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saving throws against emotion effects. If you roll a success on a saving throw against an emotion effect, you get a critical success instead.

5TH LEVEL

BLACKHORN WEAPON ADEPT
Prerequisites: Blackhorn Weapon Familiarity.
Wielding a blunt weapon has become second nature, and you feel lost without one in your hand. Whenever you score a critical hit using a mace, club, maul or warhammer you apply the weapon's critical specialization effect.

RELENTLESS DRIVE
Trigger: You bring a foe to 0 Hit Points.
The thrill of combat is enough to drive you onwards and test your strength against another foe. You gain temporary Hit Points equal to your Constitution modifier until the end of your next turn.

9TH LEVEL

IMPENETRABLE CARAPACE
Because of your thick natural armour, you recover from combat at a much quicker rate than other races. If you rest for 10 minutes, you gain Hit Points equal to your Constitution modifier × half your level. This is cumulative with any healing you receive from Treat Wounds.

ALMIGHTY SHELL
Even under your dense shell, your muscular frame and stocky build make you a walking tank and a formidable foe. Increase your maximum Hit Points by your level. You also decrease the DC of recovery checks when you have the dying condition by 1.

If you also have the Toughness feat, the Hit Points gained from it and this feat are cumulative, and you decrease the DC of recovery checks by 4.

13TH LEVEL

BLACKHORN WEAPON EXPERTISE
Prerequisites: Blackhorn Weapon Familiarity.
Your weapons are an extension of yourself after years of experience. Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in certain weapons, you also gain that proficiency for maces, clubs, mauls and warhammers.

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